

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0575

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJECT: BUTHELEZI AND SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE

REF: (A) CAPE TOWN 0486, (B) DURBAN 175, (C) CAPE TOWN 0542,

SUMMARY: SINCE THE OVERWHELMING VICTORY OF CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI'S INKATHA IN THE FIRST KWA-ZULU ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN FEBRUARY, TWO SEPARATE EVENTS IN PAST TWO WEEKS HAVE (A) FOCUSED PUBLIC ATTENTION ON POLITICAL ROLE OF BUTHELEZI AND THE RECENTLY-CREATED SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE (SABA), AND (B) HIGHLIGHTED IN A PARTICULARLY VISIBLE WAY, THE RIFT WHICH CONTINUES TO EXIST BETWEEN BUTHELEZI AND HIS ALLIES ON ONE HAND AND MORE MILITANT BLACK GROUPS ON THE OTHER. WHILE BUTHELEZI CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN HIS POLITICAL BASE IN KWA-ZULU THE FUTURE OF SABA WILL DEPEND ON (A) WHETHER SABA CAN MOVE BEYOND SYMBOLIC OPPOSITION AND DEVELOP SPECIFIC POLICIES WHICH WILL EFFECTIVELY PROMOTE BLACK INTERESTS AND (B) ON EXTENT TW WHICH MILITANTS ENCOUNTER SAG SUPPRES-
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SION IN THEIR EFFORTS TO REBUILD THEIR OWN ORGANIZATIONS.
END DUMMARY

1. REFTELS REPORTED, RESPECTIVELY, INKATHA'S COMPLETE SWEEP OF THE FIRST KWA-ZULU ASSEMBLY ELECTION IN FEBRUARY (REF B), THE ELECTION OF CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI AND COLORED LABOR PARTY LEADERS LEON AND HENDRICKSE FROM THE ROBERT

SOBUKWE FUNERAL IN GRAAF-REINET MARCH 11 (REF A), AND THE LAUNCHING 2 DAYS LATER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK ALLIANCE IN A MEETING IN CAPE TOWN WHICH WAS DISRUPTED BY MILITANT STUDENTS EXPRESSING HEATED OPPOSITION TO BUTHELEZI AND LABOR PARTY LEADERS (REF C).

2. REACTIONS TO LATTER TWO EVENTS HAVE VARIED. AS REPORTED, BUTHELEZI AND LABOR PARTY LEADERS HAVE TRIED TO MINIMISE BOTH INCIDENTS VARIOUSLY AS WORK OF "POLITICAL THUGS" AND/OR AS SMALL AND INSIGNIFICANT GROUP OF "CHILDREN" WHO SHOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER CONTROLLED BY THEIR PARENTS AND WHO WERE "INSTIGATED" BY FORCES (READ "SAG") TRYING TO DISCREDIT GENUINE BLACK LEADERS, I.E., THEMSELVES. THERE WAS, OF COURSE, MORE TO IT THAN THAT. IN FACT, PHYSICAL CONFRONTATION WITH BUTHELEZI AT SOBUKWE FUNERAL WAS CARRIED OUT BY GROUP OF SOME 75-100 YOUTHS, LED PRIMARILY, WE UNDERSTAND, BY ADHERENTS OF BLACK PEOPLE'S CONVENTION (BPC) AND STUDENT'S REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC) FROM PORT ELIZABETH AND SOME MEMBERS OF SOWETO ACTION COMMITTEE FROM JOHANNESBURG. ALTHOUGH RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER ENGAGED IN ACTUAL CONFRONTATION, LARGE PART OF CROWD OF SOME 4-5000 WERE IN FACT SINGING ANTI-BUTHELEZI SONGS AND THERE WAS NO RPT NO INDICATION OF SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FOR BUTHELEZI.

3. AT SABA MEETING IN CAPE TOWN, NUMBER OF CRITICS WAS SMALL AND REPRESENTED PRIMARILY STUDENTS FROM COLORED CONFIDENTIAL

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UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE AND YOUNG MILITANTS FROM BLACK TOWNSHIPS HERE. IN BOTH CASES, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MILITANTS LAY NOT IN THE NUMBERS ACTUALLY PRESENT BUT IN FACT THAT THEY REPRESENT A POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW WHICH IS WIDELY HELD BY LARGE NUMBERS OF POLITICALLY ACTIVE AND ARTICULATE BLACKS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, THESE INCLUDE NOT ONLY SUPPORTERS OF SUCH FORMER STUDENT GROUPS AS SASA, SASM AND VARIOUS SRCS, BUT ALSO BPC, MANY ANC AND PAC SUPPORTERS AND, PARTICULARLY IN THE CAPE, ADHERENTS OF THE OLD EUROPEAN UNITY MOVEMENT WHO HAVE LONG CRITICIZED LABOR PARTY PARTICIPATION IN COLORED REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL AND ADVOCATED BOYCOTT OF CRC ELECTIONS.

4. MANY MILITANT BLACKS ARE CRITICAL OF BUTHELEZI FOR "WORKING WITH THE APARTHEID SYSTEM". THEY ALSO FEAR THE ZULU NATIONALISM WHICH THEY BELIEVE INKATHA REPRESENTS AND MISTRUST BUTHELEZI'S PERSONAL AMBITIONS. MOST MILITANTS REJECT ARGUMENT THAT INKATHA AND SABA ARE THE ONLY MAJOR BLACK POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS WHICH ARE "UNBANNED" AND WHICH MAY OFFER "PROTECTED" PLATFORM FOR CONTINUING TO OPPOSE SAG POLICIES, ONE BLACK MILITANT RECENTLY REMARKED THAT THIS WAS PRECISELY THE PROBLEM, THAT MILITANTS FEAR BUTHELEZI

IS BEING BUILT UP BY THE SAG AS "THE" BLACK LEADER
IN EVENT AN "INTERNAL SOLUTION", "A LA" RHODESIA SHOULD BECOME
NECESSARY AT SOME FUTURE TIME. WHILE THIS MAY BE CONSIDERED A
POLITICALLY NAIVE VIEWPOINT, IT DOES ILLUSTRATE DEPTH OF
SUSPICION WITH WHICH MANY NON-ZULUS REGARD BUTHELEZI.

5. WHILE MOST MILITANT BLACKS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN
CONTINUE TO TAKE UNCOMPROMISING LINE TOWARD BUTHELEZI
AND SABA, THERE IS A GROUP OF OLDER (ROUGHLY OF BIKO'S
GENERATION) BPC ADHERENTS IN CAPE TOWN WHO, HAVING OPPOSED
BUTHELEZI (AND THE LABOR PARTY) IN THE PAST, HAVE NOW COME
TO CONCLUSION THAT IN FACT SABA OFFERS ONLY PRACTICAL WAY
OF ENGAGING IN ORGANISED BLACK POLITICS SHORT OF UNDERGROUND
REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY. THIS GROUP INITIATED EFFORTS
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SEVERAL WEEKS AGO (BEFORE SOBUKWE FUNERAL) TO ESTABLISH
CONTACT WITH YOUNGER BPC SUPPORTERS IN JOHANNESBURG AS PART
OF INITIAL EFFORT

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0575

TO PERSUADE THEM TO "TAKE ANOTHER LOOK" AT BUTHELEZI AND

COMPANY. MEETING WAS PREVENTED BY ARREST ON UNRELATED MATTER OF THE JOHANNESBURG CONTACT BUT EFFORT WILL BE RESUMED. ATTITUDE OF THIS CAPE TOWN GROUP IS BASICALLY THAT YOUNGER MILITANTS MUST PUT ASIDE THEIR EMOTIONAL DISLIKE OF BUTHELEZI AND RECOGNIZE THAT SABA REPRESENTS A FUNCTIONING POLITICAL VEHICLE WHICH MOST LIKELY TO REMAIN IMMUNE TO SAG SUPPRESSION AND THAT MILITANTS SHOULD JOIN IT IN LARGE NUMBERS AND TRY TO INFLUENCE ITS POLICIES. WE DO NOT BELIEVE CAPE TOWN GROUP IS PARTICULARLY NUMEROUS OR INFLUENTIAL BUT FACT THAT THEY HAVE COME TO THIS VIEWPOINT AND ARE WILLING TO URGE IT ON YOUNGER MILITANTS IS OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE.

6. CONGEN DURBAN REPORTS THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS REDOUNDED TO BUTHELEZI'S ADVANTAGE IN NATAL AND KWA-ZULU WITH ZULUS BRIDLING AT PERCEIVED SLIGHT TO ZULU HONOR AND WHITES TENDING TO APPRECIATE BUTHELEZI'S MODERATE QUALITIES COMPARED WITH THOSE OF HIS OPPONENTS. SOME ELEMENTS OF INDIAN
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COMMUNITY (STILL RANKLING AT HIS INTEMPERATE REMARKS AFTER INCIDENT AT DURBAN-WESTVILLE UNIVERSITY LAST SEPTEMBER) GREETED BUTHELEZI'S DISCOMFORT WITH DISCREET GLEE WHILE NATAL INDIAN CONGRESS (NIC) VICE CHAIRMAN FAROOK MEER CLAIMED THE INCIDENTS SHOWED HE DOES NOT HAVE SUPPORT OF BLACK YOUTH. NIC WAS THOUGHT TO BE ON VERGE OF JOINING SABA AT CAPE TOWN MEETING BUT DID NOT. HOWEVER, ONE SOURCE HERE WHO WELL-INFORMED ON INDIAN POLITICS SAID THIS WAS ALMOST ENTIRELY A FUNCTION OF PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BUTHELEZI AND MEER WHICH "WILL BE SORTED OUT." SOURCE EXPECTS THAT NIC WILL STILL JOIN SABA IN NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE.

7. IN CAPE TOWN, LABOR PARTY LEADERS WERE WELL PLEASED WITH LARGE CROWD THAT TURNED OUT FOR SABA MEETING. THEY PROFESSED TO BE UNCONCERNED AT HOSTILITY OF STUDENTS (REF C) AND PREFERRED TO STRESS FACT THAT SO MANY "COLOREDS" HAD TURNED OUT TO HEAR AND WARMLY APPLAUD AFRICAN LEADER. NONETHELESS, POLITICAL BALANCE IN COLORED COMMUNITY PROBABLY NOT SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED BY RECENT EVENTS. THOSE INCLINED TO SUPPORT LABOR PARTY WILL SUPPORT SABA. INTELLECTUALS, STUDENTS AND OTHER LEFT-WING CRITICS ON ONE HAND AND SMALL GROUP OF CONSERVATIVES REPRESENTED BY DR. FRED BERGINS OF FREEDOM PARTY ON THE OTHER, WILL CONTINUE TO CRITICIZE SABA. HOWEVER, IN OPINION OF CONGENOFF WHO ATTENDED MEETING, TENDENCY OF BOTH BUTHELEZI AND LABOR PARTY LEADERS TO BRUSH OFF AL CRITICAL QUESTIONS AND TO TREAT THEM WITH DISDAIN DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR POSSIBILITY OF CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE IN FUTURE.

8. PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN SABA AND MILITANT GROUPS APPEAR DIM AT LEAST IN NEAR FUTURE. BLACK
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MILITANTS ARE IN CONSIDERABLE STATE OF FLUX AT MOMENT, WITH THEIR ORGANIZATIONS BANNED AND MANY OF THEIR BEST LEADERS DETAINED. SOME ARE BEGINNING EFFORTS TO REORGANIZE ON LOCAL LEVEL LOOKING TO FUTURE REBUILDING OF COUNTRY-WIDE ORGANIZATION. OTHERS ARE ARGUING THAT COUNTRY-WIDE ORGANIZATIONS ARE TOO VULNERABLE AND THAT FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE EFFORTS SHOULD BE CONCENTRATED ON BUILDING STRONG LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONTINUING TO DEVELOP POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES. IN EITHER CASE, MOST MILITANTS ARE UNLIKELY TO SEE MUCH MERIT IN JOINING SABA AS INDIVIDUALS. THEY ARE LIKELY TO CONCENTRATE IN SHORT-TERM ON TRYING TO PUT THEIR OWN HOUSES IN ORDER WHILE WAITING FOR EVENTS TO SHOW JUST HOW "PROTECTED" SABA'S PLATFORM MAY PROVE TO BE.

9. AT SAME TIME, ONE CANNOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT PHYSICAL CLASHES BETWEEN MILITANTS AND SABA ADHERENTS WHICH WOULD IMPEDE ANY FUTURE RAPPROACHMENT. LOCAL PRESS RECENTLY REPORTED THAT LEADER OF SOWETO ACTION COMMITTEE, ISHMAIL MKHABELA, WAS VISITED BY GROUP OF MEN WHO THREATENED HIM WITH VIOLENCE IF HE FAILED TO APOLOGIZE FOR DISPARAGING REMARKS WHICH HE MADE AT ROBERT SOBUKWE FUNERAL ABOUT CHIEF BUTHELEZI. INKATHA OFFICIAL GIBSON THULA WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT SOME OF BUTHELEZI'S SUPPORTERS REGARDED HIM "ALMOST AS A MESSIAH" AND THEIR ANGER WAS REACHING "DANGEROUS" LEVELS. ON OTHER SIDE, THERE CONTINUES TO BE RECURRENT RUMORS OF PLANS BY SOME MILITANT GROUPS TO ACT AGAINST LEADING BLACKS REGARDED AS COLLABORATORS WITH THE SAG. OBVIOUSLY, ANY EFFORTS AT PHYSICAL INTIMIDATION OF SABA LEADERS WOULD MAKE ANY FUTURE RECONCILIATION EVEN MORE DIFFICULT. ULTIMATELY, WHETHER SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF MILITANT BLACKS CAN BE PERSUADED THAT SABA OFFERS USEFUL POLITICAL WAY TO CONTINUE OPPOSITION TO SAG WILL MOST LIKELY TURN ON (A) WHETHER SABA CAN MOVE BEYOND SYMBOLIC OPPOSITION AND DEVELOP SPECIFIC POLICIES WHICH WILL EFFECTIVELY PROMOTE BLACK INTERESTS AND (B) EXTENT TO WHICH MILITANTS
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ENCOUNTER SAG SUPPRESSION IN THEIR EFFORTS TO REBUILD THEIR OWN ORGANIZATION.
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